PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Gmelina arborea* Roxburgh

**GENUS** *Gmelina* **FAMILY** Lamiaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Comb tree, Snapdragon tree, Tall beachberry

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Seeds, Fruit, Flowers - flavouring, Leaves

The seeds are eaten.
The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They are also pickled.
The flowers are mixed with glutinous rice to make a cake like dish. They are used for flavouring and colouring.
The boiled flowers are fried and eaten.
The young leaves are cooked and eaten.

## DESCRIPTION

A tree which loses its leaves. It grows to 10-25 m high. The trunk is erect and the branches are horizontal. The bark is greyish brown. The bark peels off in thin flakes. Young parts are covered with silky hairs. The leaves have stalks. The leaves are 10-20 cm long by 7.5-14.5 cm wide. They are broadly oval and have a wedge shaped base. The leaves underneath are covered with hairs. The flowers are brown or yellow. The grow in loose flower clusters at the ends of branches. These are about 25 cm long. The fruit is fleshy and with a hard covering over the seed. It is oval and yellow outside when ripe. It has 1-2 oblong seeds. The fruit pulp is edible.

## HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It is native from Pakistan to Malaysia. It grows in Nepal to about 1100 m altitude. It grows in shady places. In India it grows in coastal regions and also in deciduous regions of central India. It needs a wet climate. It does best with a rainfall between 750-4,500 mm per year. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In Yunnan.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Plants are grown by seed. It can also be grown by cuttings, budding or grafting. It is best to soak seeds for 24 hours before planting. Seeds germinate in 20-50 days. Seeds are sown in a nursery then transplanted.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

It is very fast growing. Plants seed most years and often with 2 peaks during the year. In NE India plants flower and fruit February to July.

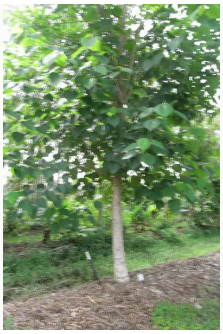
## NOTES

There are 33 Gmelina species. They are mostly tropical. It is used for timber. Also put in the family Verbenaceae.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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